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Gangs are often thought of as an issue only in the city, but now an Illinois congressman is trying to draw attention and resources to the problem in the suburbs.

CBS 2's Joanie Lum explains what's being done to make sure the streets are safe.

You might not see them in the suburbs every day. But federal authorities say gangs are moving to the suburbs and they bring this firepower with them -- easy to conceal sawed off shotguns and automatic weapons that can penetrate a cop's bulletproof vest.

Gangs might be dealing heroin in a neighborhood near you.

"It's not just a group of local tuffs, strong links to an Intl Cartel. That's the real concern," said U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk.

Kirk is calling on the federal government to help suburban police agencies fight gangs.

Suburban officials say Chicago gang members are expanding their drug businesses and recruiting younger children, kids from ages 10 to 13.

"Federally, we won't prosecute juveniles. They are used as drugs couriers, weapons couriers, predominantly as shooters, too," said Andy Traver from the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Chicago Division.

"What these children see on the way home, the glorified life, fancy car, chains, hanging on the

corner," former gang member Marcial Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez was a drug courier for a Chicago gang. He got out, got married and now teaches kids his son's age to stay away from gangs. And he helps parents recognize the signs.

"Know who your children's friends are, who they associate with, those are key factors," Rodriguez said.

These shirts were confiscated in gang arrests. Rodriguez says athletic apparel often reflects gang membership.

"Wardrobe changing to one color is one thing to look for," Rodriguez said.

Lake County authorities say more than 3,000 gang members operate north of Lake Cook Road. Some are extensions of well-established Chicago gangs.